

VZCZCXYZ0012
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHUB #0086 0412103
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 102103Z FEB 09
FM USINT HAVANA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4112
INFO RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0034
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 0152
RUCOWCV/CCGDSEVEN MIAMI FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUCOGCA/COMNAVBASE GUANTANAMO BAY CU

C O N F I D E N T I A L HAVANA 000086

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/10/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [CU](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: JAPAN SEEKS U.S. ENGAGEMENT ON CUBA

Classified By: Chief of Mission Jonathan Farrar for reasons 1.4 (d) and (b)

11. (C) Japanese Ambassador Akira Takamatsu invited the COM to lunch on February 9, COM's first day in Havana following consultations. Takamatsu's main discussion point was to urge the USG to pursue a policy of "engagement" with the GOC, which he said Japan believed would be in the interest of the entire region. Cuban President Raul Castro and other GOC leaders had expressed publicly their willingness to enter into a dialogue with the United States, and Takamatsu said that both Vice President Carlos Lage and National Assembly President Ricardo Alarcon privately had expressed their views to him that the ball is in the U.S.'s court to respond.

12. (C) Takamatsu noted that Japan, Canada, Spain, and others in recent years have pursued policies of engagement with the GOC. COM asked what results had Japan seen from its dialogue. Takamatsu cited Cuba's acceptance of selected bilateral offers of disaster assistance following last year's hurricanes, which had reversed Cuba's longstanding tendency to decline such aid. COM observed that this was a small opening for a longstanding dialogue. Takamatsu responded that the GOC leadership is old, heavily military, and conservative, and thus slow to change. He hastened to add that dialogue nonetheless was useful.

13. (C) COM asked whether countries such as Japan, Canada, and Spain, which pursue such engagement policies, take the opportunity to consult and coordinate with one another. Takamatsu said no, but that such coordination could be useful. COM asked about regional powers such as Brazil, which also seek to engage the GOC but from a different perspective. Takamatsu said the interests of Brazil were sufficiently distinct (i.e., focused on trade and investment) that including Brazil in such consultations would not be productive.

4.(SBU) Takamatsu noted that Cuban Foreign Minister Perez Roque is scheduled to visit Japan March 7-10 for the next round of the GOJ-GOC political dialogue. He added that Japan did not expect to sign any major bilateral agreements during Perez Roque's stay. Takamatsu expects to depart Cuba for reassignment in Japan's Foreign Ministry following the visit.

15. (C) Comment: USINT believes that the time to test the GOC's willingness to engage on issues of interest to us would be upon the announcement or implementation of USG policy initiatives toward Cuba, such as those to be considered on family travel and remittances. We also believe that such a time would be right to reach out to our democratic friends to bring their policies and ours more closely in line. Contrary

to the advice of our Japanese colleague, we believe that
Brazil and others in the hemisphere could be approached
usefully as part of such an effort. End Comment.
FARRAR